DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 238 883 SP 023 705

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TITLE Influencing Teacher Attitudes and Knowledge about Child Maltreatment.
SPONS AGENCY American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 83
NOTE 19p.; Parts of this paper were presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (36th, San Antonio, TX, February 1-4, 1984).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Attitude Change; *Child Abuse; *Child Neglect; Child Welfare; *Course Content; Elementary Secondary Education; Inservice Teacher Education; Legal Responsibility; Preservice Teacher Education; Prevention; School Role; Student Behavior; *Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Role; *Teacher Workshops

ABSTRACT

Child maltreatment, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse as well as chronic neglect, is a growing problem in society and one that educators must understand and be prepared to address. In 1981, Tennessee Technological University was selected by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education to be one of 13 institutions across the nation to pilot-test a model curriculum on child abuse and neglect. The university's participation in this project, through its College of Education, involved the offering of a workshop during 1982. The overriding purpose of the workshop was to instruct inservice and preservice educators about preventing, identifying, reporting, and responding to child maltreatment of which they become aware in the course of their school responsibilities. The participants in the workshop consisted of 8 inservice teachers (graduate students) and 32 preservice teachers (undergraduates). Results from the workshop evaluation showed that participants' views had changed significantly in a favorable manner and that they had increased their knowledge of child maltreatment. The workshop session topics, along with a summary of the primary objectives and activities by session, are included. (JMK)

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INFLUENCING TEACHER ATTITUDES AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT CHILD MALTREATMENT

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1983

The project described herein was funded in part through a grant from the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. Parts of this paper were presented at the 36th Annual Meeting of AACTE, San Antonio, Texas, February 1-4, 1984.

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INFLUENCING TEACHER ATTITUDES AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT CHILD MALTREATMENT

Child maltreatment, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse as well as chronic neglect, is a growing problem in our society and one that educators must understand and be prepared to address. It has been pointed out repeatedly in the literature that teachers and other school-based personnel play a critical role specific to identification, reporting, and prevention in child abuse cases and to delivery of coordinated community services.[1,2,3,4] Compelling reasons for education involvement include (1) the fact that teachers spend more time with children than anyone else, excluding parents, and are therefore presented opportunities to be aware of abuse, and (2) the evidence that abused and neglected children often demonstrate significant learning problems.[5,6,7]

Despite the well-documented legal and professional basis for training of educators in the area of child maltreatment, it is not receiving sufficient attention in schools of education across the nation. This fact is discussed in some detail in a 1980 publication from the Education Commission of the States,[8] and the rationale for training is clearly presented. Attempts have been made to develop in-service programs on child abuse.[9]

In the Fall of 1981, Tennessee Technological University was selected by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) to be one of thirteen institutions across the nation to pilot test a model curriculum on child abuse and neglect. AACTE, in conjunction with the Tennessee Association of Colleges for Teacher

Education (TACTE), funded the training activities through a grant from the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect and provided curricula developed by the ECS (1980). The University's participation in this Project through the College of Education involved the offering of a workshop during the Spring Quarter, 1982. The overriding purpose of the workshop was to prepare inservice and preservice educators in preventing, identifying, reporting, and responding to child maltreatment about which they become aware in the course of their school responsibilities. A related goal was to provide the impetus and information for area school systems to establish guidelines, policies and procedures.

METHOD

The participants in the workshop consisted of eight inservice teachers (graduate students) and 32 preservice teachers (undergraduates). The individuals completed a three quarter hour credit course (30 clock hours) of instruction.

Curriculum

In the development and implementation of the workshop, the four major sections suggested by the ECS curriculum, including (1) nature of abuse and neglect, (2) educators role, (3) cross-cultural aspects, and (4) practicum experience, were reorganized and expanded to include nine class meetings of three hours each. The session topics along with a summary of the primary objectives and activities by session is presented below (Figure 1). In addition the participants spent an additional three hours completing course evaluations.

Activities which proved to be most helpful in accomplishing workshop goals were agency guest speakers on investigation and intervention,

Figure 1

Summary of Workshop Objectives and Activities by Session

Topic	Objectives	Activities
Session I: Nature and Scope of the Problem and State Law	Provide an overview of abuse-basic facts. Elicit participants own goals. Identify personal and group views-attitudes. Introduce causative and related factors. Clarify personal and professional responsibilities of educators. Introduce State Child Abuse Law.	Get acquainted exercise-dyads. Lecture and class discussion. Small group values clarification task. View filmstrip-discussion, "What the Educator Sees".
Session II: Identifying Physical Abuse and Chronic Neglect	Introduce PL 93-247 and differentiate four main categories of maltreatment. Present behavioral and physical indicators of neglect and physical abuse.	Lecture. View filmstrips-"Signs of Alert" and "What Behavior Can Tell Us". Small group activity using case studies.
Session III: Identifying Sexual Abuse and Emotional Maltreatment	Present behavioral and physical indicators of sexual abuse and emotional maltreatment. Begin project task.	Lecture. View filmstrip "Before It's Too Late". Small group activity using case studies. Establish tentative project topics.

Session IV: Reporting	Introduce reporting statues in various state laws. Review Tennessee statute. Clarify issues related to reporting. Describe procedures for educator's reporting. Discuss the "Buckley Amendment".	Lecture and discussion. View filmstrip-"Issues in Reporting." Guest lecture-attorney. Small group and individuals work on projects.
Session V: Investigating Cases and the Role of the Courts	Introduce the role of the criminal, juvenile and family courts in child maltreatment cases. Understand specific concepts and strategies, including hearings, guaridan- ad litem, and laws. Review and analyze Department of Human Services investigation procedures and case management.	Lecture and discussion. Film "Working Together". Panel of DHS protective service workers. Guest lecture-juvenile court judge.
Session VI: Prevention and Intervention	Introduce local and national focused intervention activities, including counseling, child development services, and Parent's Anonymous. Define and delineate primary as opposed to secondary prevention. Give examples of crisis intervention with long and short-term service alternatives.	Lecture and discussion. Parent's Anonymous Panel presentation. Guest speaker from Mental Health Center. Small group simulation and role play.

Session VII: School Policies and Procedures	Assess school system services available to a maltreated child and family. Describe an action planning process. Apply problem solving steps to a specific child abuse and neglect case. Overview models of parent education and training.	Lecture and discussion. Small group project task time provided. Practice parent education and communication skills. Problem solving activity on issues such as "administrative hush up".
Session VIII: School Policies and Procedures	Provide an overview of child abuse and neglect policy development with a historical perspective and current national trends. Analyze existing school system policies in the area (fourteen counties). Review elements of model school policies. Analyze the issues related to reporting and responding in the school setting.	Role play and team activities. Lecture and discussion. Guest lecture-teacher member of multidisciplinary team. Filmstrip "Whose Child is This".

Session IX: Action Planning and Reports	Use workshop content and other resources to plan action steps. To share action planning strategies and projects.	Group reports. Discussion. Workshop evaluation form completed.
Session X: Evaluation	To evaluate student learnings. To evaluate the workshop.	Completion of evaluation instruments.

an attorney who presented the Tennessee statutes, small group tasks emphasizing case reviews and decision making, audio-visual material to introduce identification of the sub-areas of maltreatment,[10] reviews of model school policies, and individual or small group projects. The projects which generally equate to the practicum experience topics in the ECS curriculum outline, were a culmination of the workshop. A sampling of the project topics and formats included:

Teacher Awareness of the Law - Questionnaire

Maternal/Infant Bonding - Library Research

Identify Physical Indicators - Art Project, Drawings, Illustrations

Attitude Toward Punishment - Community Survey

The Multidisciplinary Team - Visit and Report

The Social Workers Role - Interview and Agency Visit

Institutional Abuse - Visits to Institutions

Parent Training - Model Development

Workshop Evaluation

In order to access the impact of the workshop a ten item Attitude-Knowledge Scale was developed. The instrument centered around the major objectives of the workshop and consisted of five attitudinal items (items A, D, F, G and H in Table 1) and five knowledge items (items B, C, E. I and J). The instrument was administered during the first and last class meetings of the workshop and was completed by each individual, indicating their degree of agreement to each item on a five point Likert Type scale (5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Undecided, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree). Complete pre and post-test data from the instrument were available for thirty-three (33) individuals.

Twenty-nine (87.9 percent) of those were preservice and four (12.1 percent) were inservice teachers. Twenty-nine were females and four were males. Twenty-two (66.7 percent) were under 22 years of age and eleven (33.3 percent) were 22 years or over. The major area of training or experience of the participants was as follows: twenty-five (75.8 percent) special education, five (15.2 percent) early childhood or elementary education, and three (9.1 percent) secondary education or other field in education.

Results of Workshop Evaluation

Initially the results of administration of the questionnaire were analyzed by sex of the participants, whether they were preservice or inservice teachers, age level, and area of training or experience. The results of these analyses indicated that there were no differences. Therefore, a composite summary of the results obtained with the total group of 33 participants was prepared (Table 1). Following is a presentation of the results obtained for each item.

Item A. As a result of the workshop, the participants significantly changed their overall views ($p < .001$) with regard to legal penalities that should be imposed in child maltreatment. The mean pretest score on this item was 4.2 (indicating strong agreement with the statement). The mean postest score was 3.3 which indicated the group favored less severe penalities for those involved in child abuse cases. Thus the idea that punitive measures, against those involved in child abuse, did not contribute to rehabilitation.

Item B. The group significantly changed its view ($p < .001$) toward the statement that "Most child abusers are either mentally ill

or they are chronic criminals." The mean score from pre- to postest decreased from 2.5 to 1.4. As a whole the group acquired a new prespecitive about this issue.

Item C. At the beginning of the workshop the participants felt strongly ($\overline{X}$ = 4.3) that "educators have an important role to play in identifying and reporting suspected maltreatment." Although the change was not significant, the group felt even more strongly ($\overline{X}$ = 4.7) about this point at the end of the workshop.

Item D. Even though the differences were not significant from pre to post workshop test scores (4.1 versus 4.7), the group as a whole did change its attitude toward the statement, "educators have an important role to play in prevention and intervention." The participants preceived even more strongly that educators have an important role to play in the prevention and intervention of child abuse.

Item E. At the beginning of the workshop the participants rated the statement "most physical abuse occurs with children in the elementary age range" with a mean score of 3.4. The post-score increased to 3.6. More physical abuse in children occur at the preschool age level, birth to six than from 6 to 12. This would tend to indicate that in future workshops, more emphasis needs to be placed on this point.

Item F. At the beginning of the workshop the participants indicated that they agreed ($\overline{X}$ = 3.9) with this statement "child abuse should be a criminal rather than a civil offense." Postest scores indicated a significant difference ($p < .01$) in mean rating ($\overline{X}$ = 3.4). The participants preceived that child abuse cases should be treated as a civil offense as opposed to a criminal offense. It should be noted that this issue is in debate in many states. In Tennessee,

TABLE 1

Means and Standard Deviations and T-Values for Differences for Pre and Post Scores for Items on Attitude-Knowledge Scale

Item	Pre-Test		Post-Test		
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	t
A. Generally child abuse penalities should be more severe.	4.2	1.0	3.3	0.9	4.60***
B. Most child abusers are either mentally ill or they are chronic criminals.	2.5	1.0	1.4	0.5	5.52***
C. Educators have an important role to play in identifying and reporting suspected maltreatment.	4.3	1.3	4.7	0.4	1.97
D. Educators have an important role to play in prevention and intervention.	4.1	1.3	4.7	0.4	0.17
E. Most physical abuse occurs with children in the elementary age range.	3.4	0.9	3.6	0.9	1.01
F. Child abuse should be a criminal rather than a civil offense.	3.9	1.1	3.4	0.8	2.82**
G. Spanking children in school with a paddle is usually abusive.	2.4	0.8	2.2	0.9	1.13
H. It is best to identify yourself when you report suspected abuse.	2.9	1.1	3.9	0.8	6.02III
I. School systems should have formal, broad-approved policies related to child maltreatment.	3.7	0.9	4.6	0.5	5.14***
J. The goal of returning an abused child to his/her home--where the abuse occurred--is a good goal usually.	2.4	1.2	3.5	1.0	4.70***

** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

child abuse cases are initially treated as civil rather than as criminal cases.

Item G. The attitudes of the participants changed little as a result of the workshop in regard to the issue of whether or not corporal punishment in the form of spanking is abusive. The mean score on this item decreased from 2.4 to 2.2.

Item H. As a result of the workshop the participants changed their views significantly ($p < .001$) toward identifying themselves when a suspected child abuse case is reported. The mean scores increased from 2.9 to 3.9.

Item I. Participants changed their views significantly ($p < .001$) from 2.4 to 3.5. As a result of the workshop the participants state that "the goal of returning an abused child to his/her home--where the abuse occurred--is a good goal usually."

In summary, the workshop changed the participants views significantly in a favorable manner on three of the five attitudinal items. On the other two items their attitudes also changed in a favorable way. The participants increased their knowledge significantly on three of the five areas covered by the instrument. On one of the remaining two items, they possessed a high degree of knowledge at the beginning of the workshop.

CONCLUSION

The workshop described in this paper, while considered by the authors to be effective in achieving the established goals, is only one of many ways of organizing and presenting curricula related to the educator's role specific to child maltreatment. There are numerous resources available to Colleges and Departments of Education that wish to include modules, components or complete courses on this topic. Certainly there is a great need. Unfortunately, too many teachers, both those fresh out of training programs and those involved in in-service programs, either do not recognize or do not accept their professional responsibility to become involved in responding to child abuse.

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